

Goal 3. More Bicycle-Related Education, Promotion, and Enforcement

The strategies in this goal area will help educate all roadway users about bicycle safety and increase public awareness of opportunities for bicycling in the District of Columbia.

Core Recommendations

Recommendation 3.1. Educate motorists about safe operating behavior around bicyclists.

DDOT will educate motorists about bicycle safety through media campaigns, driver's tests, and the distribution of written materials. DDOT will also target taxi cab, bus, and truck drivers about safe driving behavior around bicycles.

Recommendation 3.2. Educate bicyclists about safe bicycling.

DDOT will educate bicyclists about traffic safety. Materials should emphasize helmet use and obeying traffic laws. DDOT will work through bicycle groups like WABA to educate their members on bicycle safety.

Recommendation 3.3 Enforce traffic laws related to bicycling.

The Metropolitan Police Department will enforce laws related to bicyclist and motorist behavior. MPD will target unsafe bicycling practices such as red light running, wrong-way riding, and riding on the downtown sidewalks. They will also target motorists who speed, run red lights, and pass too close to bicyclists.

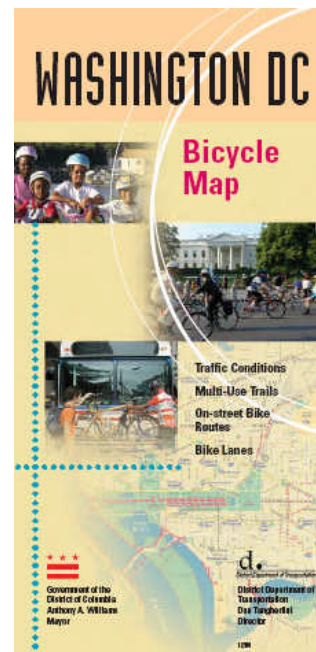
MPD and the Department of Public Works will ticket and tow vehicles that park in bicycle lanes. DDOT should reduce the impact of construction on bicycle facilities.

Recommendation 3.4. Establish a Youth Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Education Program.

When educating cyclists, it's best to start young. DDOT is currently working with WABA on a youth Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Education Program in DC Schools. This program will be evaluated and expanded. Supporting efforts can also be undertaken by the DC Department of Parks and Recreation. Over 50,000 students attend DC Public Schools (DCPS) and many more attend private schools. Efforts to encourage bicycling to school must be complemented by a program to improve the safety of the routes students take to school.

Recommendation 3.5. Distribute the District of Columbia Bicycle Map to a wide audience.

DDOT will produce a large number of DC Bicycle Maps for the general public. Maps will be easy for all residents and visitors to obtain. A press release will be issued when the Bicycle Map is first available. DDOT will update the bike map every five years to reflect improvements in bicycle facilities. The map will be distributed by DDOT with the help of WMATA, DPR, NPS, and tourism organizations at the following destinations for bicyclists:



- Metro stations
- Metro buses
- DC park and recreation centers
- Retail businesses
- Libraries
- Parks
- ANCs and other community groups

Supporting Recommendations

Recommendation 3.6. Increase the visibility of bicycling in the District government and encourage bicycle commuting.

DDOT should support Bike to Work Day, promote bicycle friendly DC government worksites, and encourage use of bicycle transportation among city service providers, such as police, parking enforcement agents, and building inspectors. DC Bicycle Program staff should develop a bi-monthly newsletter to share news about bicycle transportation successes and opportunities within the District government. It could provide agency staff with information about implementation of the Bicycle Master Plan and upcoming projects. These actions will set a positive example for residents of the District.

DDOT should encourage employees to bike to work. DDOT should make sure all DC offices have adequate bike parking. These efforts can be expanded to offer monetary incentives to employees who ride to work, making bicycles available during the day for bicycling to meetings, and providing shower facilities in buildings. Establishing a strong Bike to Work program at the District Government will make the program easier to market to other employers. District agencies could boost their efforts by creating a Bike to Work Day competition. The agency with the greatest number of employees bicycling to work would receive an award.

Recommendation 3.7. Establish a Safe Routes to Schools Program.

DDOT should establish a Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Program. This program will focus on making streets safer for bicycling and walking by adding sidewalks, making intersections safer, and calming traffic near the school. Secure bike

parking should also be provided. The 2004 federal transportation reauthorization act contains funding for a safe routes program.

As part of the program, DDOT should encourage students to bike to school. Groups such as the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), universities, and health organizations can also become partners in this effort. Students at some of these schools are discouraged from riding to school because bicycle parking is prohibited or secure bike parking is not provided on school grounds. Classroom bicycling competitions, bicycle trip diaries, adult-led “bicycling school bus” groups, and visits from bicycle police are a few of the ways to encourage students to bicycle.

Recommendation 3.8. Maintain and expand the District Bicycle Program web page of the DDOT website.

DDOT should continue to maintain the District Bicycle Program web page on its website. Additions to this page should include:

- A comment form for people to submit maintenance requests and other ideas online
- A list of projects that have recently been implemented throughout the District
- A downloadable version of the Bicycle Master Plan
- A downloadable version of the District of Columbia Bicycle Map



DDOT has partnered with the Washington Area Bicyclist Association to provide bicycle and pedestrian safety training in DC elementary schools.

Recommendation 3.9. Inform residents about bicycle transportation opportunities on an individual basis.

DDOT should work with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), WABA, and WMATA to market alternative transportation, including bicycling, to individuals. Known as Travel Smart in some areas, the program works by sending letters to all homes in a specific neighborhood. These letters would ask residents to respond if they were interested in having a specially-trained representative show them how to make one of their typical trips by bicycle. These representatives, possibly WABA members, would come to the resident's home or workplace to ride with the resident on the bicycle trip. This program could be an extension of COG's existing Commuter Connections program. Travel Smart has increased the number of people making trips by bicycle in Paris, London, and Portland.

Recommendation 3.10. Market the District as an "Active Vacation Destination."

DDOT should work with NPS and the DC Heritage Tourism Corporation, DC Convention and Tourism Corporation, and the Greater Washington Board of Trade to market the District as an "Active Vacation Destination." Outdoor recreation is the second most popular activity for leisure travelers, behind shopping. About 27 million travelers took bicycling vacations in the past five years, making bicycling one of the top three most popular outdoor vacation activities². Eighteen million people visit DC each year, but tourists spend most of their time in the Mall area. Bike rental stations and a well-advertised bicycle system would increase the mobility of tourists. This would allow them to bicycle between sites and explore the historic and diverse neighborhoods of the District. "Bike the Sites" already promotes bicycle tourism in the Mall area, and they should be invited to participate in this effort.

Bicycle transportation for visitors can be promoted by:

- Posting the DC Bike Map and information about bicycling.

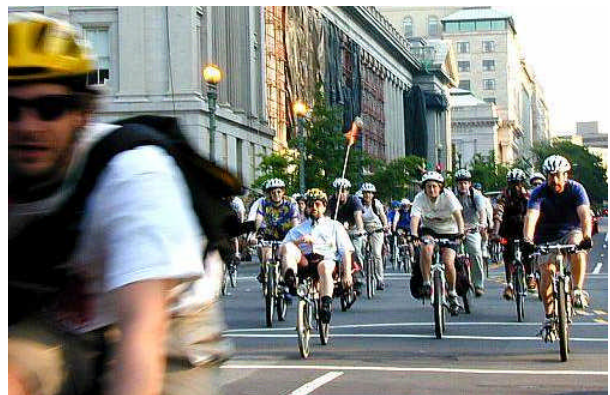
- Distributing the DC Bike Map to all tourism organizations.
- Encouraging tourism organizations to distribute the DC Bike Map.

Recommendation 3.11. Establish partnerships with health care organizations to promote bicycling as a healthy activity.

DDOT should work with the DC Department of Health (DOH) and area hospitals to promote bicycling as part of the effort to prevent obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and cardio-vascular disease.

Recommendation 3.12. Support bicycling rides and events in the District of Columbia.

The District currently has several major bicycle events, including Bike DC and Bike to Work Day. Each of these events draws thousands of participants. The District government should continue to support these and other bicycling events in the City. Support can be provided through DDOT and the MPD. The DC Sports and Entertainment Commission, DC Convention and Tourism Corporation, and Greater Washington Board of Trade can also help rally the business community behind these events.



² Travel Industry Association. Online: <http://www.tia.org>, February 20, 2004

